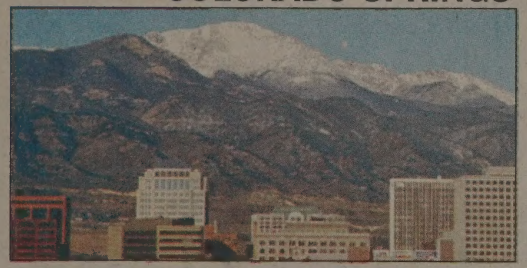
COLORADO SPRINGS



GAZETTE TELEGRAPH

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 25, 1993 | ★ 35¢ DAILY/$1 SUNDAY

UPDATE

Lawyers group pulls convention

Isaac denies calling homosexuals 'queers'

"I did not make that statement. This is (the Colorado Bar Association's) counterattack. To tell you the truth, they bore me. They're an embarrassment."
— Mayor Robert Isaac

By **Rich Laden** and **Ray Flack**
Gazette Telegraph

Mayor Robert Isaac is being accused of slurring homosexuals by referring to them as "queers," a charge hurled by the Colorado Bar Association as it announced Wednesday it would yank its 1993 convention from Colorado Springs.

"Do you mean I have to invite the queers?" Isaac supposedly asked three bar association representatives during a meeting last month to discuss the convention and whether a welcome letter should be written for gay and lesbian attorneys.

Isaac flatly denied making the comment. He accused the bar association of smearing him because it is catching flak for pulling its meeting out of Colorado Springs.

"I did not make that statement," Isaac said. "This is their counterattack. To tell you the truth, they bore me. They're an embarrassment."

Regardless of whose recollection is accurate, the fact remains that 400 to 700 of the 12,000 bar association members will not meet at The Broadmoor hotel in October as scheduled and will move to a city the group thinks will welcome gays. Except for 1990 and 1992, the group has met at The Broadmoor for the past 75 years. The convention was expected to generate about $1 million for the hotel, restaurants and stores.

The flap is more political fallout from Amendment 2, the controversial measure that bans laws protecting homosexuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation. And, it comes at a time when some people are pushing an alternative to Amendment 2 aimed at ending the squabbling.

This latest controversy began in January when the bar association's board of governors wrangled over whether to boycott Colorado Springs, the birthplace of Amendment 2.

Eventually, it voted 2-1 to remain in Colorado Springs — but also agreed to seek a letter from the city that welcomed all attorneys regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, age, handicap, religion, marital status or sexual orientation. The last reference was meant to appease members who did not want to come to Colorado Springs.

Talks then began with Isaac to have him write such a letter. Isaac, who routinely sends welcome letters to conventioneers, balked at singling out any group.

It was during a Jan. 14 meeting in Isaac's office, attended by City Attorney Jim Colvin, bar association executive director Charles Turner and local attorneys Scott Briggs and Tom Cross, that the mayor supposedly referred to homosexuals as "queers." The term is considered offensive by gays and

See **CONVENTION**/A3

DIGEST

NATION

▶ **TARGETING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:** Rapists and others who assault women could face civil rights suits in addition to criminal charges under legislation introduced Wednesday in Congress./**A5**

▶ **COURT LIMITS PROPERTY SEIZURES:** The Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that the government cannot seize the property of innocent citizens just because it was previously acquired with drug money./**A8**

HEALTH

▶ **BENEFITS OF EXERCISE:** Taking up vigorous exercise adds about 10 months to the lives of middle-age men, and those who start while young gain a bit more, perhaps a year or two, according to a study published today in the New England Journal of Medicine./**A9**

WORLD

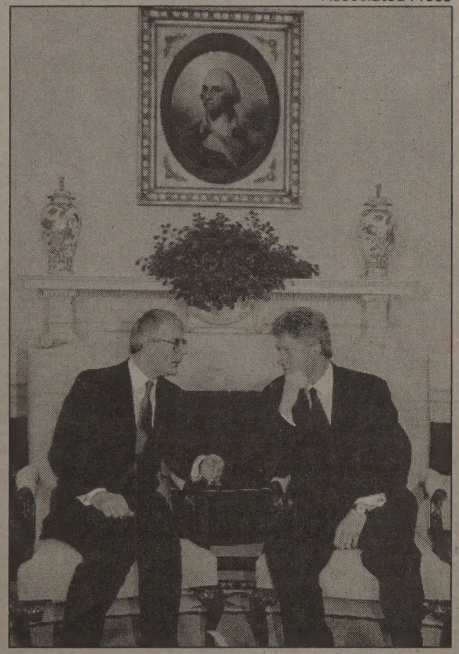
▶ **IRAQ THREATENED U.N. COPTER:** A U.N. official told the Security Council on Wednesday that Iraq twice threatened to shoot down a U.N. helicopter that was carrying out weapons inspections this week./**A11**

CITY/REGION

▶ **EXPENSIVE DONATION:** An 18-karat gold mesh bracelet found nestled in a box of jewelry given to Goodwill Industries by an anonymous donor has been appraised at $1,850. Goodwill officials say it wasn't donated by mistake./**B1**

STATE

Associated Press



Major in Washington

British Prime Minister John Major joins President Clinton on Wednesday in the Oval Office of the White House. Major said Clinton's decision to airdrop relief supplies into Bosnia was "thoroughly welcome." WORLD/**A6**

BUSINESS

▶ **DEVELOPMENT STUDY LAUNCHED:** The Greater Colorado Springs Economic Development

PEOPLE, ETC.

Making himself at home

Fantik, a 6-month-old elephant, takes a seat Wednesday on a couch in the apartment of his owner, Lyudmila Popova. Popova, a worker in Ukraine's Kiev Zoo, took Fantik home because the other elephants were being hostile toward him.

Judge backs Coleman

Gary Coleman, star of TV's "Diff'rent Strokes," has been awarded almost $1.3 million by a Los Angeles court that ruled that the actor was done wrong by his parents and business adviser between 1982 and 1987. The court said his folks, **Willie** and **Edmonia Coleman**, plus ex-adviser **Anita De Thomas**, mismanaged his money and drew excessive commissions, salaries, fees and pension benefits. Coleman and his parents have been battling in court since 1989, with them trying to get him declared incompetent. Coleman, 25, said he was "extremely pleased" with the judgment.

55-year-old Welshman, whose portrayal of psycho killer Hannibal Lecter in "The Silence of the Lambs" won him an Oscar.

Celebrity carjacking

Meredith Baxter, the mother on TV's "Family Ties," last weekend became what is believed to be the first celebrity carjack victim. It happened in Beverly Hills, Calif., while she and son **Peter**, 8, were going to an afternoon movie. The actress said two men popped up out of nowhere. Though she didn't see a gun, she calmly told them: "Let's not make this a murder." Her white Mercedes was equipped with a tracking device and police

▼▼▼ WOULD YOU BELIEVE...

Wrong number, wrong voter

The telephone rang and a familiar, slightly hoarse voice said: "This is Bill Clinton. May I speak to John Clark?"

Yes, that was President Clinton on the phone, a White House spokeswoman said Wednesday.

But sorry, wrong number — and wrong voter — Austin Sullivan of Santa Rosa, Calif., told the president.

Sullivan, 79, a political conservative, said Clinton explained Monday that he was in the San Francisco Bay area and was trying to reach an old friend. He apologized profusely for disturbing Sullivan.

Sullivan said Clinton also thanked him for his support and said: "Thank you for voting for me."

"Oh, I didn't vote for you," Sullivan responded.

But he said he was happy with what Clin-

Convention/

From A1

lesbians.

Interviewed on Wednesday, Turner, Briggs and Cross insisted Isaac made the comment. Cross said it came as an exasperated Isaac complained about the media, other politicians and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which canceled a June convention in Colorado Springs in protest over Amendment 2.

"We were somewhat stunned at the time," said Cross, the bar association's past president. "We decided to keep our cool about it. But he did make the remark. It was clear in his attitude from the beginning that he was hostile to the whole idea" of writing a welcome letter for gays and lesbians.

Turner said bar association officials have only now disclosed Isaac's remark because "we didn't want it to appear that we were holding this out as some way to blackmail him to get the letter we wanted."

Current bar association president Wiley Daniel dropped the bombshell about Isaac during a Denver news conference Wednesday. He cited Isaac's remark, as well as his refusal to write an acceptable welcome letter, as reasons to pull the convention. Isaac did send the group a brief letter, but it did not mention gays or lesbians.

"It's abundantly clear to us now that the mayor's previous bigoted remark stands," Daniel said. "Especially in light of his derogatory comments, he does not welcome everyone to the Springs."

But City Attorney Colvin accused the bar lawyers of lying.

"I can't think of why they would say something like that — and in my opinion they made it up — other than to make themselves look like they're doing the right thing," Colvin said.

Said Isaac: "They've got to save face because they can't move the convention on the basis of not having an invitation in the form they wanted. They already look bad as far as I'm concerned. I'm really disgusted with them."

Isaac's alleged comment drew heat from Frank Whitworth, a spokesman for Colorado Springs-based Ground Zero, which opposes Amendment 2. Whitworth said he wasn't surprised by Isaac's remark after watching his opposition to a local gay-rights proposal two years ago.

"I don't think there's ever been any question that he certainly holds homophobic attitudes," Whitworth said.

Some City Council members said they didn't believe Isaac made the remark. Nevertheless, news reports about the allegation threaten t\ focus more adverse publicity on the state. Amendment 2 has prompted calls by various individuals, groups and celebrities for travel and economic boycotts of Colorado.

"It obviously prolongs this kind of image problem that the state and the city is acquiring," Councilman Randy Purvis said. "It's unfortunate. If the comment was said, I don't think it speaks for the majority of the people of Colorado Springs."

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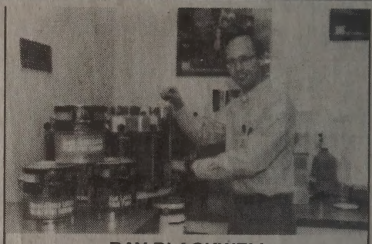

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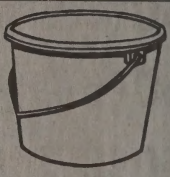

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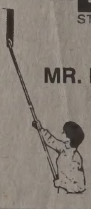

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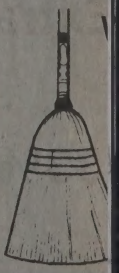

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